Lillian Belcher

From The Pocahontas Times---September 29, 1927

Dear Mr. Andrew Price:

As to the killing of Baker by the Indians at Marlinton, I have several times been told by Captain Joel Hill, who was a son of Richard Hill. He said it was on a Sabboth morning and Richard Hill and Baker started to the river to take a swim. Hill was in front of Baker. When Mr. Hill came to the fence, he put one hand on the fence and jumped over. When Mr. Baker put his hand on the fence, the Indian shot him through the breast. The Indian then threw his hatchet at Hill and missed his head. Hill leaped back over the fence. Baker sank down in a fence corner and asked Hill not to leave him. Hill ran to the house and went to get his gun. The women had been cleaning up and had moved the guns from the place they were usually kept, and he could not find his gun.

A small boy by the name of Slater had a gun in his hands. This Mr. Hill tried to take it from him. Slater had some sort of a hypnotic fit and held on to the gun while Hill swung him about over the floor, for sometime before he could wrench the gun from Slater.

But in the meantime the Indian had prized up the corner of the fence, dulled a buckskin string around Baker's neck, dragged him under the fence and scalped him. Hill said if he could have found his gun he might have shot the Indian; at least have kept Baker from being scalped. Mr. Hill said the Indian had hidden under the bank of the river behind a clump of Greenbriers.

M. R. Dunlap
Ponca City, Oklahoma.

[illegible] in possession of a trader

POCAHONTAS COUNTY.

CHAPTER 4 - Section 2 - Part a

The Shawnees were the Indians who caused the settlers in the Greenbrier Valley the most trouble. There was hardly a time when a Greenbrier Valley man would not shoot a Shawnee on sight and they were a most bloody nuisance when our ancestors were trying to raise a patch of corn on the rich lands here in the old days. The fact that the Shawnees were in the east and the west too is due to the fact that they were split into two tribes. The tribe that lived east of the mountains in the Tennessee country was forced north by their enemies and they were sometimes after that found with towns at Winchester, in the Valley of Virginia and different places in Pennslyvania. This eastern tribe in moving to and from the settlements at Winchester and eastern Pennsylvania had to traverse West Virginia. They would have to cross Seneca Trail or Warrior's Road which runs through Pocahontas County, and the military town of the Iroquois at Mingo Flats, Randolph County, lay in their line of travel and that is the occasion of the corrupting of that place and making the garrison traitor to the Five Nations.

The Senecas, the last tribe to join the Five Nations, was the highest type of Indians in this section of the country. When they joined the Five Nations, they refused to give up their arms and were made the police force of the Iroquoise

nations, and kept to themselves the department of war and foreign affairs. The part of this country which is now Pocahontas County was kept by the Senecas. They gave up cannibalism but clung to their military life. That is the reason that the great military road that ran through the county seventy miles was known as the Seneca Trail rather than the Iroquois road. This road was probably the most remarkable road in America at the earliest date that history records. It led from New York to Georgia and was about five hundred miles long. It passed through Elkins and turned there to follow up the Tygarts Valley, crossing over the waters of Elk River at Mingo, over Elk Mountain at Edray, down Indian Draft and through Marlinton, winding to the west of Hillsboro, and coming along Droop Mountain to cross the Greenbrier River near the county line between Greenbrier and Pocahontas. It was so important a highway that in the French and Indian war, the first activity west of the main Allegheny was to establish a garrison of soldiers ar Marlin Bottom, now Marlinton, to watch that road, not against the Five Nations, but against the Shawnees and other allies of the French.

Flint is very plentiful in Pocahomtas County. It is likely that the northwest Indians from as far north as Ohio and Marshall Counties found it convenient to send their young men to this county to get flint. On Stamping Creek, near Mill Point, on the farm of Tom Beard and about one-half mile back of his residence, is a fine blue grass pasture. Here there are several hundred of the pits. Here also was Pocahontas County's oldest industry. The red men came

from the far counties with their spades made from the antlers of deer, elk and moose, staked their claims, worked them and carried back to the flint workers the precious nodules secured by the expedition. It seems remarkable that Indians would travel two hundred miles for flint when they were within two thousand feet of it at home. But this is explained by the fact that it was two thousand feet straight down in the ground, and that they had to follow the streams on the surface of the earth until they found a place where it was within digging distance. To see the flint pit of Pocahontas, get permission from Tom Beard, go in the Stamping Creek gateway road, circle the high grassy knoll and there you are. It is a beautiful place and the workings are well defined and easily identified. Flint was invaluable to the Indians. They had no iron. To get edged tools that could be used as knives, as weapons, and as augers, it was necessary to get flint, and if he lived far away then expeditions had to be made to go after it or it would have to come to the tribe in the course of trade. The Indians were not afflicted with hair on the race as are the palefaces, yet without flint they would have presented a hairy appearance. They not only shaved their faces with it but also the skull, leaving a scalp lock for the benefit of anyone who would take it. The gimlet was a common instrument from flint. The handles were wood attached th the flint blades by rawhide put on wet and which bound it like iron when it had dried. Historians agree that bone was used for the shaping of arrow heads and knives and other manufactured articles. They had another set of tools called axes and these were used to reduce

the flint to fragments. These axes or tomahawks as they are often called were made from greenstone or diorite, an igneous rock formed by great heat. The edges were formed by grinding and were very hard.

From all that remains of the former presence of Indians in our region, they never occupied it as a place of fixed permanent habitation, but for temporary resort in late Spring, Summer, and early Autumn. The existing traces of Indian occupancy all indicate such to have been a fact. At Clover Lick, Marlinton, and on the Old Field Fork of Elk are found most that remains now indicating Indian temporary occupancy. The most interesting trace of the kind in question is found in a meadow near Gibsons on the Old Field Fork of Elk River twelve miles from Marlinton. This meadow was cleared about 1860 by William Gibson, and takes the place of one of the thickest patches of laurel and alder brush that the late William Gibson had ever worked at in all his life. After it was cleared and put in meadow, a circle appeared about 132 feet in diameter, formed of a strange grass that grows, or has not been seen any place else. Mr. Gibson said that he had seen similar grass in in Indiana. The circle is formed of two figures representing rattlesnakes in the act of mutually swallowing each other. One figure-the yellow rattler-symbolizes light. The black rattler typifies darkness; both combined represent the succession night and day, and illustrates the Indian idea of time. Here the hunters would assemble to invoke the favor of that mighty mysterious deity, upon whom the contemplated pursuit of game

that
so essential to their subsistance and of their squaws and papooses, depended. Or if about to go on the war path, the braves would rally here as a rendevous, and with their dark and bloody rites and ceremonial dances performed within or around this circle would seek to placate the same mysterious power for success over their enemies in the pending battles. There was quite a contrast between the aims and purposes of the Indians and pioneers, especially the Shawnees. With them mere subsistence in the easiest way was the paramount question at issue, and for such a purpose no region surpassed this for their uses. The county abounded in all kinds of wild game and the streams were alive with fish. My father was a small boy about six years old at the outbreak of the Civil War. He lived at the old Inn at Travelers Repose at the head of the Greenbrier River. I have heard him tell many times of going out before breakfast and catching a bushel of mountain trout.

None of the 110 Colonial Indian Forts authorized by the Assembly- 1750-1770 - were in Pocahontas County. The reason for that being that it was on western waters. But there was a fort called Ft. Greenbrier located at Marlinton, with a garrison of about 200 men about 1754. There were three Indian garrison towns in Pocahontas County; one at Jim Gibson's on Elk, one at Marlinton, but I have not been able to locate the other one, it was somewhere in the lower end of the County.

The Indians used very few cooking utensils while on these expeditions. Their game was roasted over the fire on

sticks or poles in very much the same way that we barbacue our meats today.

Mr. Calvin Price, Editor of the Pocahontas Times, showed me his collection of Indian relics today. He told me that he had about twenty thousand of them but for me to say about twelve thousand. He has them packed in barrels, draweers and every imaginable place. And, of course, he has several hundred of them on display in the Times Office where visitors may see them. Most of these were found around Marlinton but he has some from all over the county. It would be impossible for me to catalogue all of them. Some of these relics are very beautiful and show great skill in workmanship. Among the things he has are hundreds of arrow heads, a flint shovel found near the Court House in Marlinton, a flint axe found at Lobelia, a pipe found at the Hamilton Field Addition to Marlinton, a greenstone axe found near John McNeels in the Little Levels. To me the most interesting of all the relics that I saw was a pipe, not unlike the pipes today, except it did not have the long stem. It looked as if it might have been polished and on one side were nine small straight marks, three in a group and three groups of them. There was another pipe found near Arborvale. Then there was a twenty inch pestle found in Marlinton, and these the Indians used to pound out their grains. It is almost impossible to describe this collection of relics but for anyone interested in Indian relics, it would be well worth their time, when in Pocahomtas County to go to the Times Office and have a look at this collection and Mr.

sticks or poles in very much the same way that we barbacue our meats today.

Mr. Calvin Price, Editor of the Pocahontas Times, showed me his collection of Indian relics today. He told me that he had about twenty thousand of them but for me to say about twelve thousand. He has them packed in barrels, draweers and every imaginable place. And, of course, he has several hundred of them on display in the Times Office where visitors may see them. Most of these were found around Marlinton but he has some from all over the county. It would be impossible for me to catalogue all of them. Some of these relics are very beautiful and show great skill in workmanship. Among the things he has are hundreds of arrow heads, a flint shovel found near the Court House in Marlinton, a flint axe found at Lobelia, a pipe found at the Hamilton Field Addition to Marlinton, a greenstone axe found near John McNeels in the Little Levels. To me the most interesting of all the relics that I saw was a pipe, not unlike the pipes today, except it did not have the long stem. It looked as if it might have been polished and on one side were nine small straight marks, three in a group and three groups of them. There was another pipe found near Arborvale. Then there was a twenty inch pestle found in Marlinton, and these the Indians used to pound out their grains. It is almost impossible to describe this collection of relics but for anyone interested in Indian relics, it would be well worth their time, when in Pocahomtas County to go to the Times Office and have a look at this collection and Mr.

Price is always most kind about showing and explaining about them. The late Andrew Price in some of his writings for the W. Va. Historical Society said that he had picked up as many as fifty arrow heads while plowing his garden. His garden lies along the Seneca Trail or Warriors Road as the Indians called it.

MATERIAL FROM:

Articles written by the late Andrew Price, Pres. of the West Va. Historical Society and published in the West Va. Legislative Hand book for 1926 and 1928.

History of Pocahontas Co. by Dr. Wm. T. Price

Withers Chronicles of Border Warfare.

Information from Calvin Price, Editor of Pocahontas Times.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY.

CHAPTER 4 - Section 1

I have been unable to find any evidence or facts to show that there were any people in this county previous to the Indians. Mr. Douglas McNeill, Principal of the Marlinton High School, tells me that he has spent a great deal of time and study on this question and he thinks it quite unlikely that there were any Mound Builders here except on hunting expeditions, as they were agriculturists and this county at that time was not suited to their pursuits. However, Mr. McNeill says he knows of two mounds in this county but he could not say for sure whether they were built by the Mound Builders or the Indians. One of these mounds is on the Kee farm about a mile from Marlinton, and the other is on his farm about two miles from Buckeye. They one on his farm he excavated last summer. They found no sign that it had ever been used as a burial ground, but they did find some ancient money. This money may have been used by the Mound Builders or it may have have been Indian money. This he has never been able to find out about.

Although arrow heads and other relics are quite profusely scattered up and down these valleys there is hardly a trace of any Red-Man ever having ventured into the dense mountain country.

Of the numerous camp sites used by the Indians the largest appears to have been on the site of Marlinton. The Indians, like the White Men who followed them, found living easiest on the broad flats at the mouths of streams. For this reason, nearly every camp site is now covered by, or is adjacent to one of our own towns or villages. Remains of another camp ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ were found on Old Field Fork near the mouth of Cloverlick Creek. Nearby is the famous Magic Circle, which was discovered by William Gibson in 1860 after he had cleared a field of dense laurel and alder brush. When the field had been prepared for meadow a circle about 132 feet in diameter appeared, formed of grasses similar to some grown in the middle west but entirely foreign to this region. Authorities on Indian lore describe this circle as being the figures of two snakes in the act of swallowing each other. The yellow rattler depicts light, the black one represents darkness- their act reveals the Indian idea of the succession of night and day. This was probably the council circle of the tribe, evidence of whose camp has been found nearby.

In their travels into and through the county the Indians located trails which are followed, to a large degree, by our modern highway system. U. S. Route 219, the arterial highway connecting the heart of the county with the North and the South, generally follows the age-old